2 PREFACE: A message from the ECHO Ontario Superhub

5 SECTION 1: Project ECHO in Ontario

13 SECTION 2: 2019/20 at a glance

18 SECTION 3: Working together to support a high performing care system in Ontario

23 SECTION 4: Future directions

26 APPENDIX: Leadership teams & Publications
Preface: A message from the ECHO Ontario Superhub

The ECHO Ontario Superhub is a collaboration between the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) and the University Health Network (UHN). Working with the ECHO Institute in New Mexico and the Ontario Ministry of Health, the Superhub promotes high-quality implementation of the ECHO model, and supports alignment and integration across the ECHO community and within Ontario’s health care system.

ECHO programs throughout Ontario connect diverse primary care providers in every corner of the province, and are building a learning community that improves knowledge, confidence, practice and outcomes. The ECHO model helps meet important provincial priorities, including using innovation to efficiently integrate and align primary and specialty care, and to build provincial capacity to support equitable optimal care for patients in Ontario.

In 2019/20, there were 26 ECHO programs in Ontario, in the areas of autism, bariatric care, chronic pain, epilepsy, geriatric care, mental health, opioid use and pediatric care. These programs were delivered through nine organizations: Baycrest, CAMH, CHEO, Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital, The Hospital for Sick Children, Ontario Bariatric Network, Ontario Epilepsy Network, St. Joseph’s Care Group and UHN. This year, ECHO programs in Ontario collectively reached 2,621 diverse health care providers at 915 organizations (increases from 2018/19 of 41 per cent and 44 per cent respectively), showing significant adoption and integration of the ECHO model in the province. Additionally, this year the ECHO Ontario Superhub had the pleasure of delivering four separate immersion trainings to 21 different ECHO teams, and an annual conference connecting 150 health care and related professionals (increases from 2018/19 of 31 per cent and 15 per cent respectively).

We thank our funder, the Ministry of Health, for its support and dedication to continuous improvements within our health care system, and its commitment to equity of care for patients. The Ministry’s funding of the ECHO project means that more health care providers will be empowered to provide the right care, in the right place, at the right time.
ECHO Ontario Superhub

With the ECHO movement spreading quickly, Superhub sites have been developed with the support of the ECHO Institute to train and support the implementation of new ECHO projects, and connect existing ECHO projects. The ECHO Ontario Superhub, a collaboration between CAMH and UHN, serves new ECHO projects in Ontario and across Canada. In 2019/20, the ECHO Ontario Superhub supported the launch of 9 ECHOs within Ontario, 1 ECHO outside the province, and 1 ECHO outside Canada.

Additionally, the ECHO Ontario Superhub hosted the 2020 ECHO Ontario Annual Conference on January 31st, 2020 with 150 participants from health care and related professions across the province.

Along with training, the Superhub:

leads provincial ECHO initiatives:
- monthly ECHO Ontario collaborative meetings
- an annual ECHO Ontario conference
- strategic planning support for the growth of the ECHO model in Ontario

provides all existing, new and potential ECHO programs in Ontario with ongoing mentorship

leads the development and implementation of quality assurance and quality improvement frameworks for ECHO programs in Ontario

acts as an agent of the ECHO Institute to expand the ECHO model in Ontario
2020 ECHO Ontario Achievement Award

The ECHO Ontario Achievement award recognizes individuals or groups who have made outstanding contributions towards education and research through ECHO to improve and enhance health care in Ontario.

Dr. Ruth Dubin was the recipient of the 2020 ECHO Ontario Award of Excellence. Ruth dedicated many years, and boundless passion for helping others, toward the growth of ECHO in Ontario. As a community based family physician, she recognized the knowledge gaps, lack of support and professional isolation faced by so many primary care providers. In 2012, when she first learned about ECHO at a pain conference in the United States, she saw that this model would meet the needs of primary care providers in Ontario. It takes vision and tenacity to be a change leader. Ruth embodies these qualities and worked successfully with her colleagues and the Ministry of Health to bring ECHO to Ontario in 2014.

Ruth accomplished so much in her time with ECHO. She was co-chair and a specialist HUB member of ECHO Chronic Pain, the first ECHO in Ontario. She provided mentorship to many ECHOs that followed in Ontario, across Canada and internationally. She published papers, spoke at conferences, networked tirelessly and enthusiastically, to establish ECHO as a recognized and respected educational and clinical support for primary care in Ontario. Since retiring in 2019, Dr. Ruth Dubin has been missed but always remembered for her outstanding commitment to ECHO Ontario.
What is Project ECHO?

Project ECHO (Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes) is an innovative “hub and spoke” education model that aims to help health care providers build capacity in the treatment and management of complex health conditions. The model leverages videoconferencing technology to connect specialists with primary care providers, increasing their knowledge and skills and enabling them to manage complex challenges in their communities.

Currently there are over 830 ECHO projects being delivered in 39 countries, and the model has recently been recognized by the American Medical Association as an innovative tool to build capacity within the health care system and improve patients’ health outcomes. This year the ECHO (Expanding Capacity for Health Outcomes) 2019 Act was introduced in the U.S. Senate, building on the ECHO Act of 2016. The Act will establish a grant program to evaluate, develop and expand the use of technology-enabled collaborative learning and capacity building models.

People need access to specialty care for their complex health conditions. There aren’t enough specialists to treat everyone who needs care, especially in rural and underserved communities. ECHO trains primary care clinicians to provide specialty care services. This means more people can get the care they need. Patients get the right care when they need it, close to home. This improves outcomes and reduces costs.

Project ECHO

- empowers health care providers to use best practices
- reduces the need for specialist visits
- improves the quality of specialty care in Ontario’s primary and community care settings
ECHO Ontario
Dedicated to building a sustainable health care system

Mission
To build capacity through virtual communities of practice for health care providers in Ontario that will increase access to specialized health care, improve patient outcomes and create health equity.

Vision
A virtual community advancing the best health care in Ontario.
How we are building a high-quality, connected health care system

**ENGAGE**

ECHO Ontario engages system leaders, patients and health care providers to build a community of practice. Through this community we share knowledge to improve the health care of Ontarians.

**INTEGRATE**

ECHO Ontario co-ordinates the integration of the ECHO model into the Ontario health care system to create equitable health care access and efficiencies.

**IMPACT**

ECHO impacts the lives of patients, the practice of providers and the quality of the health system. ECHO Ontario achieves improved, measurable health care and patient outcomes through research, quality improvement and education.
ECHO was started in New Mexico by Dr. Sanjeev Arora.

**2014**
Ontario’s first ECHO program was launched at UHN and Queen’s University, focusing on chronic pain and opioid stewardship. CAMH received funding shortly thereafter to implement a Mental Health ECHO in partnership with the University of Toronto.

**2017**
8 ECHO programs across 4 organizations were funded and launched in Ontario. 2 of the organizations (UHN and CAMH) collaborated in launching the ECHO Ontario Superhub to support new and existing ECHOs in Ontario.

**2020**
26 ECHO programs across 9 organizations are now operating in Ontario, and reached 2,621 health care providers in 2019/20.
ECHO programs in Ontario

Organization: Baycrest in collaboration with North East Specialized Geriatric Centre

ECHO Programs:
- Care of the Elderly
- Care of the Elderly—Long-Term Care
- Care of the Elderly—Dementia

ECHO Care of the Elderly focuses on improving the quality of care of older adults in Ontario, by increasing the knowledge and skills of primary care providers in meeting this population’s health care needs.

Organization: Centre for Addiction and Mental Health

ECHO Programs:
- Mental Health
- First Nations, Inuit and Métis Wellness
- Addiction Medicine and Psychosocial Interventions (in collaboration with St. Michael’s Hospital)
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (in collaboration with Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre)
- Trans and Gender Diverse Healthcare
- Structured Psychotherapy
- Integrated Mental and Physical Health
- Adult Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
- Early Psychosis Intervention (funded by CIHR Grant)

ECHO Ontario Mental Health at CAMH and the University of Toronto (ECHO ONMH) aims to support evidence-based management and treatment of mental illness and addictions in Ontario, reducing disparities in access to specialty care and variation in quality of care.

Organization: CHEO

ECHO Program: Child and Youth Mental Health

ECHO Ontario Child and Youth Mental Health is a collaborative learning program through which primary care providers (PCPs) and mental health clinicians work together to care more effectively for children and adolescents with mental health problems. The program aims to change the diagnostic, prescribing, treatment and referral practices of PCPs, by providing them with evidence-based best practice guidelines and treatment recommendations, and linking them to community mental health agencies and services in their own regions.
ECHO programs in Ontario

Organization: Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital

ECHO Program: Autism

ECHO Ontario Autism aims to build province-wide community capacity and the ability to screen, diagnose and manage children and youth with autism spectrum disorder in Ontario. By doing so, the program hopes to reduce wait times for specialized care by ensuring that access to specialized care is reserved for the most complex cases.

Organization: Ontario Bariatric Network (OBN) (Guelph General Hospital, Humber River Hospital, Kingston Health Sciences Centre, St. Joseph’s Healthcare Hamilton, The Ottawa Hospital, Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre, Toronto Western Hospital)

ECHO Program: Ontario Bariatric Network

ECHO OBN aims to build capacity in primary care providers to provide evidence-based specialty care, by linking them with an interdisciplinary team of specialists from seven Bariatric Centres of Excellence across Ontario to share best practices in post-bariatric care and obesity management.

Organization: Ontario Epilepsy Network (Hamilton Health Sciences and McMaster Children’s Hospital, Kingston Health Sciences Centre, London Health Sciences Centre and the Children’s Hospital, The Ottawa Hospital, CHEO, The Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto Western Hospital)

ECHO Program: Epilepsy Across the Lifespan

ECHO Epilepsy Across the Lifespan connects providers in Ontario with interdisciplinary teams that include an epileptologist, a nurse practitioner, a pharmacist, a social worker and a community agency representative to share evidence-informed knowledge that will help in treating and managing patients with epilepsy.
ECHO programs in Ontario

**Organization: St. Joseph’s Care Group (in collaboration with The Ottawa Hospital)**

**ECHO Program:** Chronic Pain and Opioid Stewardship (North)
ECHO Chronic Pain and Opioid Stewardship North builds capacity, knowledge, and confidence in primary care in rural and remote communities in Northern Ontario. The ECHO focuses on complex patient management in chronic pain and opioid stewardship.

**Organization: The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids)**

**ECHO Programs:**
- Paediatric Pain
- Paediatric Obesity Management
- Paediatric Complex Care
- Paediatric Palliative Care (in collaboration with CHEO)

Paediatric Project ECHO delivers four programs that build a community of practice to provide educational support and expertise to interdisciplinary health care professionals. The goal of these programs is to improve providers' knowledge and confidence and to translate learning into practice.

**Organization: University Health Network (UHN)**

**ECHO Programs:**
- Chronic Pain and Opioid Stewardship
- Liver
- Rheumatology
- Concussion

ECHO Ontario at UHN delivers four programs offering case-based learning for complex clinical conditions. Healthcare providers gain knowledge and skills in these areas, increasing capacity for management of these conditions in communities across Ontario.

To learn more about these ECHOs, visit [www.echoontario.ca](http://www.echoontario.ca)
2019/20 at a glance

SECTION 2
Our collective reach this year

915
Health care organizations
↑ 44% organizations from FY 2018–19

2,621
Health care provider participants
↑ 41% providers from FY 2018–19

25,855
Hours of continuing medical education (CME) credits delivered
↑ 46% hours from FY 2018–19

636
Patient cases discussed
↑ 15% cases from FY 2018–19

*Note: there may be some duplication across ECHO organizations, as we were only able to account for duplicates within organizations, not across organizations. Therefore, individuals that participated in multiple ECHO organizations might be represented twice in this number.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kinesiologist</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaviour Analyst (BCBA)</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physiotherapist</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registered Massage Therapist</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Health Worker</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chiropractor</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physician Assistant</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational Therapist</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Therapist</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Worker</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dietician</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health Professionals*</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pharmacist</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other **</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MD (Specialist)</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Worker</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MD (Family Physician)</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurse Practitioner</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurse (RPN, RN)</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Includes Psychologists, Psychotherapist, Neuropsychologist & Psychological Associate.

** Includes Administrator, Educator, Speech Language Pathologist, Music Therapist, Naturopathic Doctor, Spiritual Care Practitioner & Personal Support Worker.
Participants by practice type

*Family Health Team - 12%; Family Health Organization - 2%; Family Health Network & Family Health Group* - 13%; Family Health Network - 0.2%; Family Health Group - 3%.

** Includes Elementary/High School, Government Agency, Pharmacy, Tertiary Care, Home Care & Hospice.
Participants by LHIN

ECHO Ontario participants (n=2621) by Local Health Integration Networks

- 60-160
- 160-260
- 260-360
- 360-460

25% of participants join from Northern LHINs
Working together to support a high-performing health care system in Ontario

SECTION 3
Participants are highly satisfied with ECHO Ontario programs.

“This will change how I approach diagnosis and discuss the impact on a child’s functioning.”

- Participant, ECHO Ontario Autism

681
Sessions held across all ECHOs
(↑ 34% from FY2018–19)
We are seeing a change in knowledge across ECHO Ontario participants.

Statistically significant improvement from pre to post knowledge scores of 14% ($p < 0.005$)

“[Paediatric Project ECHO] provided me with additional knowledge to allow me to better advocate for my patients and families and liaise with their local healthcare provider.”

-Participant, Paediatric Project ECHO

“ECHO was a timely, invaluable education and training that reduced my professional isolation. It increased my knowledge base about an integrated approach in addressing the mental health needs for individuals...”

-Participant, ECHO Ontario Mental Health
We are seeing a change in confidence across ECHO Ontario participants.

“[ECHO] has improved my diagnostic skills and increased my comfort with giving an ASD [Autism Spectrum Disorder] diagnosis.”

– Participant, ECHO Ontario Autism
We are seeing a change in practice across ECHO Ontario participants.

“My knowledge is definitely better; however, in my practice as a kinesiologist. I am working on being able to translate some of this knowledge to work with potential clients.”

-Participant, Paediatric Project ECHO

“The ECHO program has made me feel like a more capable service provider learning from the interdisciplinary community of practice. It was a privilege to have a mix of clinical feedback and education as well as support from community service providers such as myself.”

-Participant, ECHO Ontario Mental Health

Statistically significant improvement in pre to post self-efficacy scores around complex patient management ($p < 0.05$)
SECTION 4

Future directions
Future directions for ECHO Ontario

**Focus on quality**
Conduct ongoing quality improvement efforts to enhance ECHO programs, further enhancing impact for patients and providers.

**Foster growth**
Support new and existing organizations in expanding ECHO delivery for in-demand topics, in order to reach more healthcare providers across the province.

**Support transformation**
Collaborate with provincial stakeholders to integrate ECHO as a core offering in the transforming Ontario health care system.

**Strengthen the ECHO Network**
Continue to build a network of ECHO programs in Ontario that share learning, best practices and operational efficiencies in support of our collective impact.
The world is changing...fast.

**Project ECHO** has revolutionized the way we connect, learn and share information across the Ontario health care system.

We look forward to integrating and expanding Project ECHO in our new virtual world.

Moving knowledge, not people.
Appendix
Leadership teams

Baycrest in collaboration with North East Specialized Geriatric Centre
Dr. David Conn – Physician Lead
Dr. James Chau – Physician Lead
Dr. Sid Feldman – Physician Lead
Dr. Andrea Moser – Physician Lead
Lisa Sokoloff – Program Director
Navena Lingum – Project Coordinator (Baycrest)
Shaen Gingrich – Project Coordinator (NESGC)

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health
Dr. Allison Crawford – Program Co-Chair
Linda Mohri – Program Co-Chair
Dr. Sanjeev Sockingam – Program Co-Chair
Dr. Eva Serhal – Program Director
Jenny Hardy – Program Manager
Dr. Greg Lodenuqui – Co-Lead – Mental Health
Dr. Stephanie Cassin – Co-Lead – Cognitive
Behavioural Therapy ECHO
Dr. Shelley McMain – Co-Lead – Dialectical
Behavioural Therapy ECHO
Dr. Wiplove Lamba – Co-Lead – Addiction Medicine & Psychosocial Interventions
Dr. Nitin Chopra – Co-Lead – Addiction Medicine & Psychosocial Interventions
Dr. Wayne Bayci – Co-Lead – Trans & Gender
Diverse Healthcare ECHO
Renée Linklater – Co-Lead – First Nation, Inuit and Métis Wellness ECHO
Dr. Peggy Richter – Co-Lead – Obsessive Compulsive Disorder ECHO
Dr. Kathleen Sheehan – Co-Lead – Integrated Mental and Physical Health
Dr. Yona Lunsky – Co-Lead – Adult Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

CHEO
Dr. William Gardner – Co-Director
Dr. Kathleen Pajer – Co-Director
Dr. Hazen Gandy – Interim Co-Director
Josee Blackburn – Program Manager

Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital
Dr. Melanie Penner – Co-Chair, ASD Diagnosis Lead
Dr. Evdokia Anagnostou – Co-Chair, Psychopharmacology Lead
Dr. Jessica Brian – Early ASD Identification Lead
Salina Eldon – Project Manager

Ontario Bariatric Network
Dr. Mehran Anvari – Project Lead
Dr. Vanessa Boudreau – Project Co-Lead / Lead – St. Joseph’s Healthcare Hamilton
Dr. Scott Cassie – Lead – Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre
Dr. Stephen Glazer – Lead – Humber River Hospital
Dr. Nicole Kolozsvari – Lead – The Ottawa Hospital
Dr. Natasha Pereira-Hong – Lead – Guelph General Hospital
Julia Skiadaresis – Co-Lead – Toronto Western Hospital
Dr. Sanjeev Sockingam – Lead – Toronto Western Hospital
Dr. Boris Zevin – Lead – Kingston Health Sciences Centre
Daina Mueller – Clinical Coordinator

Ontario Epilepsy Network
Dr. Carter Snead – Program Co-Lead/ Lead – Toronto Children and Youth
Dr. Elizabeth Donner – Program Co-Lead/ Lead – Toronto Children and Youth
Dr. Esther Bui – Lead – Toronto Adult
Dr. Jorge Burneo – Lead – London & Thunder Bay Adult
Dr. Ayman Hassan – Lead – London & Thunder Bay Adult
Dr. Andrea Andrade – Lead – London Children and Youth
Dr. Maryam Nouri – Lead – London Children and Youth
Dr. Tad Fantaneau – Lead – Ottawa Adult
Dr. Arexo Rezazadeh – Lead – Ottawa Adult
Dr. Sharon Whiting – Lead – Ottawa Children and Youth
Dr. Michelle Shapiro – Lead – Hamilton Adult
Dr. Kevin Jones – Lead – Hamilton Children and Youth
Dr. Rajesh Ramachandran-nair – Lead – Hamilton Children and Youth
Dr. Lysa Boisse Lomax – Lead – Kingston Adult
Anastasia Vogt – Program Manager

St. Joseph’s Care Group
Dr. Bryan MacLeod – Medical Lead
Dr. Patricia Poulin – Research Lead
Dr. Tim Larocque – Program Manager

The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids)
Dr. Eyal Cohen – Co-Lead – Paediatric Complex Care
Dr. Julia Orkin – Co-Lead – Paediatric Complex Care
Dr. Catherine Diskin – Co-Lead – Paediatric Complex Care
Michelle Ho – Co-Lead – Paediatric Complex Care
Dr. Jill Hamilton – Co-Lead – Paediatric Obesity Management
Rebecca Noseworthy – Co-Lead – Paediatric Obesity Management

University Health Network
Dr. Ruth Dubin – Co-Lead – ECHO Chronic Pain & Opioid Stewardship (Retired)
Dr. Andrea Furlan – Co-Lead – ECHO Chronic Pain & Opioid Stewardship
Dr. Jordan Feld – Co-Lead – ECHO Liver
Dr. Hemant Shah – Co-Lead – ECHO Liver
Dr. Claire Bombardier – Co-Lead – ECHO Rheumatology
Dr. Amanda Steiman – Co-Lead – ECHO Rheumatology
Dr. Mark Bayley – Co-Lead – ECHO Concussion
Dr. Robin Green – Co-Lead – ECHO Concussion
Dr. John Flannery – Lead – Operations
Rhonda Mostyn – Project Manager

ECHO Ontario is a collaboration of deeply caring, enthusiastic and engaging teams. We’d like to acknowledge and extend a thank you to all the ECHO Ontario operations and hub teams that have contributed to the ongoing success of this project.
Publications


